

# maintenance

## before you ring the landlord



We get a number of calls about maintenance in the properties we manage which we are able to help solve over the phone. Below are some of the top maintenance items we receive with some tips to help determine if a specialist contractor is required to visit the property.

### lights or power points not working

No power to the entire property? Call your electricity supplier and report the fault to them. There may be a network issue, or a problem with your account that has led to a disconnection of service.

Some lights or some power points not working? Firstly, check the switchboard. In most cases, the problem will be that a fuse or safety switch has tripped. This usually happens if you have a faulty appliance, or if you have too many appliances switched on at the same time. Take special note of any switches that are in the off position. You will need to turn all switches to the off position, leave them off for a few minutes and then turn them all on again. Turn each appliance on, one at a time, if the safety switch trips when you turn on the toaster, kettle etc. then it is likely that particular appliance is faulty or has just become faulty. Keep in mind that it can sometimes be the fridge or other major appliances that have recently become faulty.

### no hot water

Check that a hot water outlet is not open e.g. the shower is running or tap left on. Carefully review your family's water consumption and what electricity plan you are on for water heating. Does your plan only heat water overnight? Have you used all hot water? On average (depending on length), a 250-litre hot water service should provide six showers. If you are quite sure that you could not have consumed all the hot water, check your switchboard. Has the isolation switch tripped? If it has, to reset it simply flip it back to the "on" position. If it trips again, you will need to call your Landlord.

### air conditioners/heat pumps

Over time, the heat pump filter will become blocked with dust. This will result in the heat pump having to work harder, meaning it will not heat or cool your home as well, and that it will cost more to run.

Depending on where you live, the general rule is to clean the heat pump filters every 6-8 weeks. If a manual has been supplied, follow the instructions on how to clean the filters. Otherwise, you should first switch the appliance off with your remote. You can open the front panel by pressing the small tabs on each end of the heat pump, and then slide out the filters. You can clean the filters by vacuuming with a brush or wiping with a damp cloth. Ensure the filters are dry before placing them back in the unit.

### insinkerators

Insinkerators are a convenient way for discarding any unwanted leftovers, expired food or food peels, but they can block if they are not used correctly. Start by running a stream of cold water into the sink before turning the unit on. Hot water works great for cleaning most things, but hot water will soften food you are trying to grind up, meaning waste can cling to the sides and cause blockages. Cold water, on the other hand, hardens food, making it easier for the insinkerator to grind it up and push the food down the drain pipe. Cut waste into smaller chunks and only put in a few pieces at a time. Once the food waste has been broken down, turn the insinkerator off and let the water run for about a minute to flush the drain pipe. Not all food can be put into an insinkerator. Eg. banana skins.

To clean the insinkerator, cut a lemon or lime in half. With the water running, add the fruit halves, one at a time to the insinkerator. Sprinkle ½ cup of baking soda down the disposal then add a cup of white vinegar. The mixture will fizz. Allow this to work for a few minutes while you boil a jug of hot water. Pour the hot water down the drain. The fruit will help clean and deodorise the drain.



### bathroom or kitchen sink blocked

Try using some Draino to clear the blockage. You could also try pouring boiling water down the sink to free up old soap or hair or try the same with the kitchen sink to remove old food from the kitchen waste. Ensure that no foreign objects have found their way into pipes or insinkerator. Items that can cause problems are disposable nappies; sanitary napkins; and teaspoons. If a contractor is needed to clear a blockage caused by foreign objects, it is the tenant's responsibility to pay the cost.

### stove element not working

First, turn the appliance off at the wall. Check the connections to make sure it is not loose or dirty. Sometimes pulling the element out, cleaning it and putting it back in again is all you need to do to fix the problem.

### oven not working

Check that you have not accidentally put the automatic timer on. If the oven is on automatic then generally you will have no power to the oven and one or two stove elements will not be working. Turn the automatic setting off and the oven should work.

### garage remote control not working

Check the battery in the remote, and that the power switch to the opening unit is still on. These are the most common causes. If there has been a power outage you will be unable to open the garage door with the remote, but you can open it manually if you activate the manual release mechanism. This is generally a lever on the control chain on the ceiling. Pull it down to release to use the door manually - but take care when opening and closing because doors close quickly. To resume auto use when power is on, you will need to push the lever back up and lock it into place on the auto setting.

If something does need repaired or maintained, it's important to contact the landlord straight away.